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BERTHA SOULE'S LOVE:
OR HOW I CAME BY A RING.

By Frances Fuller Barritt.

LYING ice-bound at U., Missouri river, Nov. 20th, 185-. Such was the brief memorandum which, chancing to find on my ivory tablet more than a year after it was written, called to mind a vivid recollection of the incidents of that day, and caused me to regard the ring on my left hand with a revived interest; and this is the story of both:

Undertaking to make a late voyage from Council Bluffs to St. Louis, on the 19th of November, we found our good steamer obstructed in her passage by a bridge of ice, extending from shore to sandbar, from bar to bar, and from sandbar to shore again, leaving two channels, which the low state of the river made of doubtful safety on the outside of the principal bars. Through one of these the water, pressed in a strong current by the ice on either side, went rushing like a cataract, and through this passage, with considerable difficulty, the steamer made a safe run; but when below the bridge, among the broken ice, it was discovered that we had come by the wrong channel, and should go aground presently where we were. Then commenced an effort, on the part of our worthy boat and her excellent officers, to get back up the channel we had just come down, to try the other, as there was imminent danger of being frozen in if the weather continued cold. All day of the 19th, the boat backed and forwarded like a couple in a cotillion, in her endeavors to make headway against the powerful current dammed up in that narrow passage, but all to no purpose. Our gallant captain, with an unruffled brow, stood hour after hour on deck, giving orders for new efforts this way and that; but when night closed in, there we were, where the morning found us, and the weather still bitterly cold. During the night, nothing could be done, and on the morning of the 20th there were about fifteen tons of ice frozen to the sides and bottom of the steamer, still further augmenting our difficulties. But with unwearied patience the officers kept at their several posts, moving the now unwieldy boat little by little—now against one bar, then against the opposite one, knocking off great cakes of ice of a ton's weight at a time—until at last

we were once more free of this hinderance. A warmer temperature setting in about eleven o'clock, with a fall of rain, so softened the crystal bridge that our steamer drove into it, widening the channel and lessening the current, until at last we had hopes of soon retracing our course in search of the true passage.

Already we had been several days on the voyage, and the usual amusements of river-travel were becoming monotonous. The passengers, of whom there were a great number, had read, and sung, and danced, and played, and told stories, until weary of themselves and one another. Among the most patient and agreeable of these was a lady I recollected meeting on a former voyage, a year and a half before, when she had interested me very much by her beauty and sweetness. Of the former, indeed, I thought she possessed an almost supernatural share; and nothing but a look of mental pain and languor in her face, marred its extraordinary perfection. Wherever she moved she drew all eyes after her, yet so simple and engaging were her manners, that she seemed unconscious of her wonderful attractiveness. This lady and myself had conversed much on the former voyage, as well as on this, and began to entertain for one another something like a warm regard. On this particular morning, I had noticed more than an ordinary appearance of suffering about her, and attributing it partly to weariness, I made some consoling remark about our brightening prospects. "It does not concern me very greatly," replied Miss Soule, "all places are much alike to me."

"I might be pardoned for saying that seems a strange confession to come from you," I said, in real curiosity about the mysterious character of her melancholy.

"When I first met you," continued Miss Soule, "I felt an impulse to tell you my history, which I then checked from a fear of doing something unwise and disagreeable; but to day I have resolved, with your consent, to make you my confidant, at the risk of losing your esteem. Shall I commence?"

"You could not confer a greater pleasure," I replied sincerely, "since I have often wished to know it."

Making room for me on the *tete-a-tete*, she began:

"I shall be extraordinarily frank with you, and confess that I once well knew that I was beautiful, far more than beautiful—that I was adorably, irresistibly

fascinating. Yet I was not vain; there was a solemn consciousness in me of the responsibility of a soul holding the lease of such a tenement as was this faultless body of mine. Men praised me with love on their lips, and longing in their eyes; they were vanquished by my slightest displeasure, and made heroes by my half unconscious smiles. Women looked on me with envious sadness in their faces, and sighed while they caressed me, until I felt that they were pierced with misery at my involuntary perfections. Children, only, regarded me happily; full of the innocence of angels, they recognized in my beauty a something familiar—something they had not yet forgotten, having seen in heaven.

"I was not vain; but I took delight in my own perfections. I gazed by hours at the reflection in my mirror, murmuring inwardly all touching conceits of poets inspired by woman's beauty; not in self-adulation, but as being impressed with the feeling of their passion. I looked upon myself as a marvel—a chance success of Nature. I recollected that all greatly gifted persons have a recompense to pay, and often mused on my yet unseen destiny. As if not to fail of her great design in any particular, Nature had formed me for, and God had ordained me a poet. I was not to be the mere occasion of feelings or thoughts I could not understand.

"No one would question my happiness. All unhappiness is a direct result of imperfect development: the harmony of my being was absolute. Not even of my situation in the world, could I complain. My parentage was respectable, my family rich and honorable; thus was I in every way removed from causes of discontent. My only apology for sorrow, had it been possible for me to be melancholy by habit, was in the fact that I was an orphan. But never having known the love of parents, the tender care of my guardian, who was also my uncle, and the affection of all my relatives, left me nothing to desire from an unknown love.

"Thus, I may say, that at the age of nineteen, to all intents and purposes, as far as I was concerned, I lived in Paradise.

"A little cloud, 'no bigger than a man's hand,' about this time appeared on my horizon. The number of times that men had brought their love to lay it at my feet, began to trouble my serene atmosphere. Hitherto I had been pleased, been thrilled,

had my imagination excited, and received it all as a natural tribute to a perfection of beauty and sweetness of temper which I had heard I possessed, until the words fell meaningless on my ears. But this oft-repeated story of love began, at last, to excite other emotions than those poetical ones inspired by the consciousness of being worthy of owning this love. I began slowly to comprehend something more than the poetry of passion—I began to understand its *sorrow*. Something like a feeling of guilt at times tormented me, for being the cause, however unintentionally, of so much pain to others. As I grew older, and read and observed more, I knew why women looked sadly upon me, and some enviously. It was because I absorbed in my being so much of the devotion which others, less favored, were languishing to receive. Their looks reproached me, and I felt unworthy their gentleness and forbearance. In society, into which the circumstances of my station and my natural gayety of temper brought me, I began to feel disturbed, as if some one wished me away. When men approached me with a candor that made me forget my uneasiness, and drew me on to be playful and self-possessed, and I was afterward startled to perceive their glowing countenances and impressive manner, or to hear some unexpected word of more than admiration, I was tempted to forswear all gayety, and never more smile among men.

"Nor was this the only effect of my power to make others as wretched as I was myself naturally happy. I began now to ask myself seriously, why I had never suffered from love, and its accompanying passions of envy and jealousy. Was my constitution so perfect, my passions so well balanced, that no one of them, not even *le grand passion*, should ever move me from my habitual serenity? Like the serpent into Eden, this inquiry entered into my mind. Henceforward, my capacity to love became to me a perpetual study. It gave me, instead of the soft compassion I had felt for those unhappy men whose worship I was forced to accept without making any return, an intense curiosity, a continual desire to contemplate their emotions, and try to make them my own by sympathy.

"There was among my acquaintances a young Cuban, whom I greatly admired, and who I knew loved me with the utmost passion. For this reason I had forbidden

him my intimacy, fearing to allow him the friendship that I extended to others. Often had he sent me the most imploring letters, entreating me to permit him to come into my presence, that his soul, which seemed perishing, might gain a little strength. To these entreaties I no longer returned my pitying refusal. Malvern became my frequent visitor; and notwithstanding I preserved toward him an air of cold repose, I had almost daily exhibitions of the heights and depths of humility and exaltation to which the vehemence of human passion may bring its subjects.

"I have said my manner toward Malvern was one of cold repose; this, however, did not last more than a few weeks. I became nervous and excitable to a degree inexplicable to myself. When he was out of my presence I was silent and dreamy, and the most trifling noise or accident startled me painfully. When he was beside me, either I was wild with gayety or trembling on the brink of tears. My friends, who observed the change in my demeanor, believed me in love with Malvern, and they were rejoiced for the sake of the young man, whose passion was well known. But I had taken care that Malvern made no such mistake. I frequently assured him that I knew nothing whatever of love, except as I imagined it; but confessed to him that I was completely *enured of my imaginations*; and that I retained him at my side *because his worship of me was the most beautiful study I could conceive of for my ideal passion*.

"Poor Malvern! The cruelty that I now selfishly practised was of the most refined and torturing character. I allowed him to see me overcome with the tender languishments of love—yet not for him; and of a love as unhappy, because as unsatisfactory as his own. Yet he had not the courage to break through his enslavement, nor I the power to disenchant myself.

"But since we had not the ability to bring this strange enthrallment to an end, the end came to us. I was walking, one evening, pensively along the crowded park of our city, with Malvern by my side; neither of us had spoken for several minutes, and I was in one of my most desponding moods, filled with an infinite but tender despair. I was roused all at once by the tones of a voice, at the same time strange and familiar, exclaiming 'My God! what beauty!' My eyes, instantly raised, en-

countered another pair regarding me earnestly, at the glance of which all the mountain of sorrow that had lain upon my breast for months soared off like a bubble of air. I could have cried out with delight; but the revulsion was too strong, and I fainted.

"When I awoke from my unconsciousness, and found Malvern sitting beside me, I was seized with the strongest feelings of repulsion. Excusing myself on account of my health, I dismissed him for that evening; and the following morning sent him a note, enjoining him as he valued my peace of mind, never to re-enter my dwelling. I wept as I sealed the cruel message, but my resolution was unalterable.

"Meanwhile, what a night had I spent! In a state of half clairvoyance, that face which I had seen in the park—the face of *my own*, kept constantly before me. Those earnest eyes gazed in mine; those lips, so shaped for eloquence, thrilled me with kisses. I shrink from describing my happiness, lest it should sound unwomanly; and yet the most intoxicating dream of love ever put into language could no more than express my perfect bliss. I thought of Malvern's love, once, during my delirium, and great and generous as it had before appeared to me, it now seemed poor and mean compared with mine. I asked not who this stranger was, nor if I should ever behold him again. I only felt that whoever or wherever he was, he was *mine, my own*—the other half of my soul; and I doubted not that we should meet again.

"The first transports of joy ended, my old tranquillity returned to me; I appeared again to my friends, radiant, serene, exalted in my single self-consciousness. And now I incurred the first blame that had ever attached to me. The condition of Malvern's mind, upon being so suddenly thrust back into solitary despondency, was truly pitiable; and those to whom the meagre fact of our intimacy was known, were forward in condemning what they were pleased to call my coquetry. Yet I felt not this calumny. I had the consciousness in my own breast of being the purest maiden of all the women I knew; notwithstanding my beauty and its natural consequence of admiration, and in spite of the multiplied solicitations I had received, both playful and serious, no bearded lip had ever so much as touched my cheek, or lover's fingers for one instant clasped my waist, or twined a curl of

mine. Neither could living man declare my eyes had ever dealt him one coquettish glance. There was in my nature no temptation to this trifling; I prized my perfections not as a means to insure the flatteries of men, but as a reason why I might live above them.

"From the day on which I met the stranger in the park, the character of my beauty changed. From being fragile, girlish, *spirituelle*, I grew queenly; the ovals in my face and figure almost imperceptibly rounded out; my color was richer, my hair softer, and my voice more full and dulcet. If I had been beautiful as a cold, unloving maiden, I was superb as a love-inspired woman. Out of respect to the friends of poor Malvern, I went little into society; and always preferred the enjoyment of my thoughts and the memory of that single glance, to any companionship. But my confidence in the ultimate return of *my own* was unflinching.

"For more than four months I watched and waited, yet never impatiently, for the expected return; always looking forward to it with joy, and believing it could not surprise me. One evening I was walking again in the park, dreaming pleasantly of that great era in my life to which I looked forward, when I came suddenly face to face with *my own*. A terrible shock went through my frame, and again I fainted.

"This time, when I awakened, it was the stranger—*my own*—Lamorne, by name, who sat beside me, half supporting me on one of the benches of the park. I blushed and smiled at encountering the earnest look he bent upon me, but was not in the least embarrassed, as it seemed quite natural that he should occupy this position toward me. Several of my friends were grouped about me, yet, when I arose, I looked at Lamorne as if to say, 'You should accompany me home.' Accordingly he did so.

"'This is the second time,' said he, 'that I have seen you taken ill; I am very unfortunate.'

"This trifling remark disappointed me. He had not betrayed, either in word or tone, that he recognized me as I had recognized him; a coincidence which I had all the time believed inevitable. Was it possible that when two spirits met who were two parts of one whole, one of them could be blind? insensible to the attraction? Dismayed by this doubt, I scarcely had an answer for his politely expressed hope that he should see me again. But on the

morrow he came, and again and again after that; and I learned soon that he had taken up his residence in our city. From this time onward, our intimacy increased, and it soon began to be rumored about that I, Bertha, was at last betrothed. This, however, was not the truth.

"It was true that Lamorne was my unfailing attendant, at home and abroad; that we held the most rapt and delightful conversations nightly, either beneath a summer moon on the balcony of my uncle's house, or in a window-nook of his pleasant parlor. But I was no longer happy. The destiny about which I had mused in years before was now made manifest; I loved, but was not loved in return.

"The nature of my intercourse with Lamorne was peculiar. My attraction for him was sufficient to hold him by my side day by day; to make him seek me to pour out his most treasured secrets of soul; to inspire him with a genius and fervor perfectly glorious, and yet he loved me not. Sometimes, indeed, I felt that he was almost conscious of the identity of our spirits; yet, whenever he approached this mood it made him restless and gloomy, and he invariably left me on the instant. It appeared to me that he struggled against the conviction. Yet why should he? Had he not given me all praise for my beauty, my genius, and my social talents? It was well known, besides, that I was not so poor as to be a burden, even to a poor man. On the other hand, he had position, wealth, and genius, and could not fear to be rejected as beneath me. Such was the unexplained peculiarity of our relations.

"Meanwhile, as I have before mentioned, my beauty seemed slowly maturing toward an undreamed of perfection. Hour after hour I sat before my mirror, studying its uniqueness, and wondering at its insufficiency to compel the love which was its own by right. Sometimes I fancied that by its very perfection it defeated itself, and wished I had been made less beautiful. But, notwithstanding my appearance was improved, I was suffering in my health, which had always before been faultless. Since my second meeting with Lamorne in the park, I had had quite frequent repetitions of those nervous shocks which on that occasion, as well as at our first meeting, had caused me to swoon away. Indeed, at every subsequent meeting, I had felt one, more or less severe, and their effect upon my constitution was becoming

apparent to myself. My spirits, also, began to suffer from them, and my uniform cheerfulness to be unsettled.

"I have said little about my emotions during the period of my association with Lamorne, except that they were not happy; indeed, it would be quite impossible for me to make them understood. The keen pleasure imparted to me by his conversation arose almost altogether from the wonderful vigor and finish of his mind, and was balanced by the exquisite pain of seeing that I held only a temporary claim to the enjoyment of it. If there was ever a period in our intercourse when I had a partial pleasure from the consciousness of my love, it was at those moments I have mentioned, when his silence and restlessness gave me a faint hope that the veil was being drawn aside which separated me from him. But when the hope was past, with the mood that occasioned it, oh, how agonizingly I deplored that defect of organization on his part which occasioned insensibility so fatal to me, and of course, as I could foresee, to him also. For I knew by the very nature of the man, so lofty in thought, so brilliant in genius, so susceptible to every form of beauty, and yet so calm and unconscious with me, that it was no brutish apathy of soul, but a fault or idiosyncrasy of constitution. To be sensible of this, and yet without the power to alter Fate's eternal decree with regard to us, was terrible indeed. Was the needle to hold itself forever away from the magnet that was drawing it with an everlasting and irresistible force? It seemed impossible; my whole being cried out against it in convulsions of despair.

"One evening, toward the close of summer—a night of exceeding beauty—Lamorne sat with me on the balcony overlooking the moon-lighted street, and its crowds of laughing or whispering promenaders. I had experienced a greater shock than usual on this particular evening, and feeling exhausted and depressed in spirits, was unable to converse with my usual animation, a fact which Lamorne at length remarked. 'You are silent, Bertha,' said he, 'while your eye follows those happy groups beneath us; can it be possible you are envious?'

"Never was question more pertinently put. It assailed me where I was most weak and undefended; and my answer was a passionate burst of tears.

"'Bertha, what have I said?' ejaculated Lamorne, surprised.

"The truth," I answered, struggling to swallow my tears.

"Pardon me, do I understand Bertha to say she envies these laughing, senseless triflers?"

"Yes," answered I, with energy, carried away by the tempest of my despair, "I *envy* even these 'senseless triflers;' *they*, at least, are beloved by one another, according to their capacity to love, and are happy accordingly."

"And Bertha is not? is that the inference?"

"That inference would be the true one," was the forced reply.

"Bertha!" exclaimed Lamorne with thunderous emphasis, "do you think you are not loved 'according to *your* capacity?' Is that the testimony of poor Malvern's fatal devotion? Does a woman, even a woman of your unquestionable fascinations, require more than a man's *life*? What more do *you* require, or what more could you have?"

"The keen reproach of his tones, as he put these rapid questions, pierced my soul through and through, for it indicated to me the injustice of his thoughts, and roused an impulse of resentment."

"Of what do you accuse me?" I asked, anticipating his intentions.

"Listen! Last night, when I went away from here, the hour being rather late, and the streets mostly deserted—for Bertha, it is very true that you have the power to detain *me* against my wiser judgment—I met at a street corner a most melancholy object—a man, who does not otherwise lack for friends or admirers, reduced to the necessity of stealing out at night, from a sick bed to the street, to watch the windows of a certain house in the hope of catching, if may be, the shadow of a lady's form upon the window curtain. That man was Malvern, dying of despair; that lady was Bertha, weeping for more hearts to break!"

"Oh, my God!" I cried, shuddering.

"Do you pity him at last, Bertha?"

"No, no: you mistake me," I hastened to explain, disregarding his question, "I am not without pity; I have never sought nor accepted love. If it has come to me undesired, and therefore met with no return, can I be held guilty of blame? Malvern himself cannot reproach me. If he knew all the truth of my soul, he would feel that I, too, needed compassion."

"How so? how is this?" Lamorne now asked, softening a little in his tones.

"Because I suffer not less than himself. Because I hope to die the same death; the sooner the more welcome."

"Bertha!" This time his tones were tender and regretful. He took my hands and led me to where the moonlight descended full upon my face, and looked at me until my glance fell. Oh, the tumult of my soul! "This Bertha, whose hands I hold, who is of all women the most gifted, body and soul; for whom men languish and die; this Bertha yet deserves compassion, and talks of dying." Then suddenly changing his tones again: "Are you not sure, Bertha, you are a most consummate actress?"

"My disappointment and despair, at this unexpected cruelty, were so overwhelming and utterly abject, that I had neither tears nor resentment. My life seemed going out of me; and I leaned against his breast for support. 'At least,' said I, 'uphold me for a moment, till I regain my strength; I will not trouble you long.'"

"What, are you ill?" he asked, placing his arm gently about my waist.

"I could hope I were dying," I whispered, as a delicious languor—the result of nervous prostration, and the electrical delight his touch conveyed to me through my exhausted nerves—stole over my faculties. This bliss, however, was not of long duration, and I was soon galvanized back to life by the inflowing current of his strong magnetic force. With returning strength came the sense of what was due to my womanly dignity, and I withdrew myself from his arm with a cold "thank you, sir," and "good night."

"No, Bertha, not yet 'good night,'" I have to tell you before I go that you are beloved, according to *your* "ability." Not to yield you love, would be more, or less, than human. It may be that you are false, and cruel as the grave; that you will not be satisfied without the homage of such souls as mine, from lust of power alone. It may be that you will desire to have me where poor Malvern is, whose Spanish ardor and English constancy have worked his death, under your ordering. But, whatever your dissimulation or your truth, whatever your thirst for conquest or your abnegation of it—hear and know that *I love you*. But I shall contend against your power of enslavement. At the same time that I confess your rule, I shall resist your tyranny. And now, good night!"

"With the last word he was gone; and

what comfort had he left me? It was better as it had been before, than to be only assured of this suspecting and reluctant love; to be treated as if it were not my due—as if I had compelled it by some unhallowed authority. And so, truly, I think he must have felt, for although our intercourse continued under its new aspect as lovers, neither of us were happy. In vain I related to him my psychological experiences, as well as I could; evidently I was not understood, and the defect in his soul's vision and sensation remained. He loved me but imperfectly, and from what I knew of his relationship to me—not understood by him—I knew he could never realize the passion of love in its perfection, because he was *unconscious of his own*, or only recognized it faintly, and through difficulties.

"As might be readily imagined, by those who comprehend my story, the condition of mind in which all these mental struggles left me was truly pitiable, and began to produce effects upon my health so serious as to be observed. Fearing to pain Lamorne by confessing how much of my suffering was attributable to him, I preserved as cheerful a demeanor as possible in his presence; while out of it, I gave way to an intense and consuming melancholy. All my mornings were burned away in a low nervous fever, and all my evenings spent in endeavors to seem as happy as I ought to be. What would I not have given to have been placed back one year, in the possession of my former ideal and unemotional existence? Or rather, what would it not be worth to live on, if my emotions were perfectly reciprocated!"

"Three quarters of a year had passed since I last saw Malvern, and first met Lamorne. I had just heard of the death of that unhappy man, whose passion for me had truly been his destruction. 'Why,' I asked myself bitterly, 'could not Lamorne have been Malvern? then this terrible intermixture of misplaced affection could not have happened. Why should this man, whose responsive soul lived not in my body; have conceived this regard for me; while the one who ought to, and does belong to me, receives the truth so cautiously and suspiciously? Is this the invincible decree of Heaven, that souls shall ever walk the world in darkness, unrecognized and unrecognized?'"

"While these rebellious thoughts once agitated my mind, I was interrupted by

the appearance of Lamorne, pale and overcome with emotion.

"'He is dead,' said he, 'and I have come to bid you farewell.'

"At that word my soul seemed to swoon away; yet I stood staring upon him with questioning eyes.

"Yes, Bertha, my unhappy friend is dead, and I have not the power to avenge him; I do not even wish for it now, though once I contended for the capacity of avenger. I feel that whatever wrong you may have done Malvern, it was out of your power to have returned his passion. In the same way, with whatever feelings I have once regarded you, I am your lover now. There is no remedy for fate; but after what has happened, we must part. Bertha, adorable Bertha, I go to return no more!

"I recollect nothing of the week following this abrupt termination of my feverish dream of reciprocal love. When next I saw and felt understandingly, I found myself upon a sick-bed, for the first time in my life. A low, nervous intermittent held me in its hot and blasting toils for many weeks. When I was better, I learned the popular gossip about my illness accused Lamorne of having purposely won my love only to forsake me. Not that I had any pity from these slanderers, but that they rejoiced over the punishment which had fallen upon me, considering it just that I should suffer for the hapless Malvern, whose death they laid at my door. How frequently does the fertile brain of rumor conceive the form of a truth without doing the least justice to the spirit of it! But these whispers had little power to annoy me. My mind withdrew itself entirely from social concerns, and was fixed, as it had been for the year previous, upon its own operations. Alas! it contemplated a dreary waste of down-fallen air-palaces and tempest-stricken gardens of promise; for, despite my doubting and fearing, I now found that with the native hopefulness of the passion, I had all along believed secretly in its final happy issue. After what had happened, I was undeceived, and allowed myself no longer even an unconfessed hope of happiness. What a bitter struggle with my destiny was there! Though without hope, I was also without resignation. At one moment I racked my soul to make it render every word and look distinctly to my eye and ear; at another, I shudderingly shrank from the too vivid truthfulness

ness of memory. I recognized no other end or aim of my existence but this love, which being defeated, left me nothing to anticipate. Again and again the impatient question went up to Heaven—Wherefore? Wherefore so beautiful, wherefore so gifted and loving, if all these precious gifts were to fall useless to the ground? Nay, worse than useless—to be my bane and punishment, as they had been the pain and destruction of others. I make no reflections upon the state of my mind; if it was absorbingly selfish, youth and passion are selfish, and mine pre-eminently so. I do not say that I am yet bent upon any schemes of general benevolence; indeed, I believe you can see in my face the witness of my undivided devotion to one idea, which some have called by the harsher name of monomania. Very well, the name makes little difference.

"Another summer came. In restless efforts after health of mind and body, I was seeking repose in the country, and calming my uneven pulses under the tender soothing of Nature, whom I dearly loved. One day there was a long fall of warm, fine, still rain—such as refreshes the luxuriant young foliage and the springing grain with almost motive life. It kept me in the house all day, a prisoner, yet so enchanted with my jailer that I was content to remain in its gentle durance indefinitely. While I sat gazing at the dripping trees in the avenue, absently dreaming of I know not what, I accidentally turned my eyes in the direction of a little dell or dingle, through which ran one of the devious paths I daily pursued in my walks, and, without feeling any surprise at so unexpected an apparition, saw Lamorne approaching the house with rapid steps, and head bent down as if in thought or anxiety. I watched him with a very natural feeling of pleasing expectancy until he was lost to sight, momentarily as I thought, by the descent of the path into the dingle. Quite eagerly I approached more closely to the window, waiting to see him emerge from the thicket, but one, two, five, and even ten minutes elapsed, and no one appeared. Not once did I remove my eyes from the path for half an hour, so fearful was I of losing the first glimpse of the beloved form; but with the lapse of time I grew anxious, and knew not how to account for the delay. Surely he would not remain out in the rain so long. Then a sudden apprehension seized me; he had only been overcome by a

longing to be near me, even in one of my favorite haunts, when the rain should keep me away, and he would go as he had come, without seeing me. Obeying the impulse which this thought aroused, I seized a shawl, and ran with all haste down the deserted avenue to the path that led to the dell. Entering it precipitately, I experienced a feeling of alarm on seeing no one there. It was impossible he should have escaped without my notice; I had scarcely taken my eye off the place, and there was no other hiding-place anywhere near. I dropped upon a seat, with a wildly palpitating heart. 'Where are you, Lamorne!' I cried vehemently.

"'Oh, if you could come to me, Bertha!' said the voice of him I sought, in a thrilling accent of earnest, yet deprecating entreaty.

"'I can, I will,' I said solemnly.

"And then the chill which creeps over the flesh at the thought of being in an invisible presence, other than God's, began to stiffen my limbs, so that I was hardly able to rise. I looked this way and that, in the desire of beholding something to break the spell, but nothing appeared, and summoning up all my strength, I rushed frantically from the spot, and paused not until I was safe in my own room. Here, again, I took up my station by the window and watched the path until dark, in a kind of expectancy most anxious and intense. When the shadows of night closed around, and I was alone in the stillness of my apartment, I endeavored to reason upon what had happened. Had I, or had I not, beheld Lamorne in the dell path? Did I, or did I not hear his voice, when I no longer saw his shape? Assuredly. After exhausting all my philosophy of facts to shake my belief in what I had seen and heard, I could only answer to myself, 'assuredly, it was so.' Then I asked myself why this had happened; and lastly, I remembered my promise: I had said 'I can, I will;' but how could I, and what must I? Not the faintest clue had I ever had to the whereabouts of Lamorne since our terrible separation. That he was suffering some great anguish of mind I was convinced, and that he wanted me I felt equally certain. But how to find him? All that night I lay in a trance of thought, and before morning my resolution was taken. My life was a useless burden to me where I was; why might I not, like EVANGELINE, go on a pilgrimage to find my lover?

Doubtless my friends would object; but I was independent, and bound to them only by the common tie of gratitude for past affection, which I meant never really to forfeit. Arming myself, therefore, against their remonstrances, I returned immediately to town to prepare for a crusade against—myself. In a week's time, attended only by a servant, I had commenced my wanderings. The only guide I had to direct, or seem to direct me, was the fact that Lamorne was a thorough student of nature—geologist, botanist, naturalist, altogether. I had heard him talk enthusiastically of the valley of this noble river, and of the glorious prairies beyond; and conjectured that, in the state of mind in which he parted from me, he would resort to science and travel as a means of bringing back the mastery of the will over the affections."

Here Miss Soule paused, and a struggle seemed going on in her mind. Conjecturing that she shrunk from confessing how useless had been her pilgrimage, I made an attempt to help her over the difficulty. "And now you find," said I, "that you have pursued a phantom—a very common experience."

"No, not quite," she answered, resuming her former manner of charming candor, "I *do* find, however, that while I get farther and farther from the object of my pursuit, I also lose sight of my former self, inasmuch that I am able to get enjoyment out of things heretofore entirely meaningless to me, that is, during the period of my greatest suffering. The events passing about me, and the manners of strangers toward myself, serve now to amuse me far more than I ever hoped they could. Would you believe it?" she asked, smiling archly, "I have had several offers of marriage from mere travelling acquaintances; and on one occasion a gentleman mistook me for—I know not what—at all events, he made love to me the first evening of our acquaintance."

I laughed, and answered that "I did not doubt it;" thinking how much more strange it was that the same thing had happened to myself. "The manners and morals of the great river are undoubtedly more free than elsewhere in the United States."

At this moment the captain came in to tell us we had made the passage of the channel, and that in a few moments we should be landed at U., a small town about a day's travel below Weston. At

this glad tidings the passengers assembled on deck, and along the guards, to see themselves brought into port once more. Miss Soule and myself, well wrapped up from the cold, were leaning over the guard toward the shore, watching the group of people collected there, when, on noticing the coming on of a new passenger, I felt my companion's form sinking heavily against my side, and on looking at her I perceived that her face was colorless, and her eyes half-closed.

"Are you fainting?" I asked, passing my arm hastily about her waist.

She shook her head. "No; do not let me faint; it is *he*."

"Have courage, then," said I cheerfully, though sympathetically very much affected, "I will open your state-room door for you, and do you lie down a few moments, until this agitation is passed." I then helped her to her room, which was close by, and as I arranged a pillow for her head, kissed her and asked: "Did he come on board?" in order to remind her of the happiness in store for her, and to inspire her with courage. She nodded her head, and smiled dimly. "Well, then," said I, "I put my commands upon you to keep your room until I see fit to release you: will you?" Again she made a sign of assent, and I left her to fulfil my instantly conceived design of so arranging their meeting as to save her a public display of her emotions.

As soon as the boat left her landing, the captain came to announce dinner. "Where is Miss Soule?" he asked, as we took our seats at table.

"She is slightly indisposed," I replied, "and will not appear at dinner."

"What a pity," said he, "that so beautiful a woman should ever be ill; yet she looks as if she had suffered much."

"Of course," I answered, "your sympathy is all for a beautiful woman, while I, being plain, and needing every advantage, would get little pity were I ever so ill."

"Fie, fie," said the captain, laughing, "that is the plainest jealousy. Did I not come to inquire about you yesterday, when you had a head-ache?"

"I stand corrected, captain; but did you notice your new passenger? I think he is a gentleman I wish to see."

"It is my turn now to be jealous. To be sure I noticed him; he is one of my especial favorites, and a better man or truer gentleman does not exist."

"How did you come to know him?" I asked, assuming to be surprised that my friend should be so well known.

"How? why he has always lived in St. Louis, and he is well enough known in that city, which is my home also."

"Just so," I answered very demurely; "I might have thought of that. Well, as soon after dinner as convenient, I would like to see Mr. Lamorne. Tell him, if you please, that a lady wishes to see him; you need not give my name. I wish to converse with him privately, and will be standing on the guards by my state-room door."

"Certainly; I will do whatever you bid me," said the captain; but I fancied he looked a shade colder after that.

However, I took up my station at the appointed place, and waited for the appearance of the gentleman. Very soon I heard the captain say, "Here is the lady." I purposely kept my face averted until the captain had retired, which he did as instantly as politeness would allow and as politeness required, when I turned and bowed to the stranger. He was a splendid looking man, whom I shall not attempt to describe, only to say that he was of the tall, dark-eyed, black-haired style of men; and as my eyes encountered his magnetic ones, I was not surprised at Miss Soule's story. Evidently he had suffered, but the lines of pain on his face were almost lost in the benign expression of his countenance.

"Mr. Lamorne," I said, "I am a stranger to you, but for a particular reason I have sought your acquaintance. I trust you will not pre-judge my forwardness."

"If I pre-judge at all, madam," he answered, with a gentle smile, "it will be very kindly; therefore you can trust me as you choose."

"Any preface to the real intention I had in seeking you, would be useless. Tell me, sir, whom you at once most dread and wish to behold." I was looking steadily at him, and saw that no explanation was needed. For a moment he was silent; then said with a great effort:

"Why should I tell you what you know already; it is Bertha Soule."

I waited a moment, not to cause him too painful a surprise, and when I thought he had guessed it, "Shall I bring her to you immediately?" I asked.

I was astonished at the fiery gleam which shot from his eyes, and the pallor which overspread his face at my question.

"Is she here?" he struggled to inquire. "Oh, madam, whoever you are, and however you became acquainted with this strange history, do not make long torture. If Bertha Soule is here, let me see her."

"No, sir," I said firmly, "you must submit to a little of the torture which you have not been too merciful to inflict."

"Nor too unfeeling to endure," he added.

"I believe you; but what I do is necessary to do. Before you can see Bertha Soule, you must give me your promise to betroth her, immediately—that is, if she consents," said I, venturing a smile.

"Easy condition," he replied, returning my smile with one of dazzling brilliancy.

"Yet you virtually repudiated her once before," I commented.

"I had sworn never to marry a coquette; and strangely enough, I did her the injustice of believing she must be one. But the wrong thought has passed away. I now know that such truth as hers to me never could have root in a false or hollow soul. Besides," he added, solemnly, "this is a union designed by Heaven; I am convinced of it. Such evidences as I have had of spiritual alliance cannot be disbelieved. But, madam—," he looked at me with a half-apologetic, half-beseeching look.

"I understand," I said, turning to go.

"I shall wish to know more of you hereafter," he said, following me a pace or two, "but now—"

"Indeed you mistake, if you attribute your good fortunes in any degree to myself," I interrupted; "for what I have said was only just prompted by the pressure of circumstances. I found Bertha Soule on a pilgrimage of which you were the shrine and the saint. Make your acknowledgments to her."

"So, she was coming to find me?" he cried, grasping my arm.

"She was following the beckoning of an invisible hand, leading her to you."

"For how long?"

"For a year and a half of wandering up and down the world," I answered; "and mark me! this wandering has saved her too finely organized brain from the blight of madness. Beware how you reward this adoring passion; beware, lest sometime in the future your harder, sterner intellect shall press her yielding mind too far!"

He released my arm and looked at me with exquisite anguish painted in his face:

"I have been a monster," said he, the tears gathering in his lustrous eyes.

"So that you are a tamed monster now, it will all be well," I answered: "but here we are. Stay you here one moment, while I step into Bertha's room."

"Can you endure the trial, do you think?" I asked, seeing how pale and ill she looked. Then I added: "Ah, happy lovers, to meet in the midst of a mutual search!"

"Did he say that?" cried Bertha, the color rushing into her wan cheeks.

"He will perish with suspense unless you hasten to look proper, and go to meet him," I said, affecting a playful haste. "Come, let me help you with this dishevelled mantle of locks. He is the handsomest man I ever saw," I continued, seeing how her hands trembled with nervous agitation, and hoping to divert her thoughts.

It was in vain that I endeavored to make her compose herself, and knowing very well whose strength would do more for her than mine could, I hastily wrapped her shawl about her, and thrust her gently through the door. I did not look after her, but sat a few moments on the side of her couch, expecting she might be brought back. At the end of those few moments, I passed into the ladies' cabin and sat down. The captain soon came and sat beside me.

"What have you done with Mr. Lamorne?" he asked.

"Set him to making love," I replied carelessly.

"Just what I expected! but you are very frank about it."

"More so than I should have been if the case had been my own, perhaps."

"So you are setting him to make love to somebody else? Well, that is a more disinterested action than I thought you capable of."

"Ah? I do not want another woman's lover, I assure you, and am always willing to assist another to her rights. But *mine*—mind you! that would be a different matter."

The captain laughed, and pretended that there was no knowing when a woman spoke the truth about her sentiments.

"Then it is because you give us no encouragement to do so, by being equally frank."

An hour later I went to Miss Soule's room. She was lying on her couch, looking flushed, but joyous.

"Keep our secret," said she, holding my hand. "Oh, how fortunate that I had just told you all about it; I should have made such a scene by myself—I always do; but now I am calm again," and she drew me down to her and kissed me gratefully.

I never saw so rapid an improvement in health and appearance as took place in Bertha Soule's case during the remainder of that voyage, which, on account of the difficulties of navigation, was considerably prolonged. She was fast returning to her former marvellous beauty, as the admiring glances of the male portion of our passengers flatteringly testified. Never, before or since, have I taken so much pleasure in thinking of the union of two lives in one, as in that of Pascal Lamorne and Bertha Soule: therefore I often find myself gazing at the pretty ring I wear on my left hand, which was placed there as a memorial by those singularly acquired friends; and is as precious to me as any ring could be, but one, which all can guess the name of.

IN MEMORIAM.

NO. III.

THE flowers are gone, their bloom is o'er,
Resting in earth, 'neath winter snows,
As thou dost take thy calm repose,
Nor lulled by ocean's slumberous roar.

As thou hast risen, they shall rise,
When wakes the gentle, genial Spring,
And o'er thy grave their sweetness fling,
Beauteous unto our loving eyes.

Dearer shall then be Greenwood's shades;
Sweeter the Spring than then before;
Never the murmur of *no more*
Shall whisper through its dreamy glades.

Meantime, we trace thy artist-skill
In many a relic, now so dear;
Each smile is dewed with Nature's tear,
Not now grief-frozen—but sad, still.

E'en garments, fashioned by thy hand,
Too sacred seem for our poor use:
We feel it sacrilege, abuse,
To loose a thread—a seam unband.

What then of treasures of thine art?
We gaze, and ponder as we gaze,
On scenes now soft through memory's haze,
Till tear-drops trickle from the heart.

Yet still we would not dare recall
The friend whom we have loved and lost;
We would not have thee at this cost,
But sooner weep, and bear our thrall.

NEW-YORK, Jan. 12. 1860.

A. P. C.